

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 13, 2007

Director Jim Nussle
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Nussle:

We are writing to express our grave concerns about White House budget documents that propose drastic cuts to vital Homeland Security programs. Programs designed to support our first responders and other transportation and infrastructure security grants that follow a risk based formula necessary to protect our nation's most vulnerable areas are inexplicably decimated within the documents we have seen. If this is allowed to take place our constituents will be left at greater risk and the mission of the Homeland Security Department will go unfulfilled. We wish to inform you that Congress will vigorously oppose such cuts.

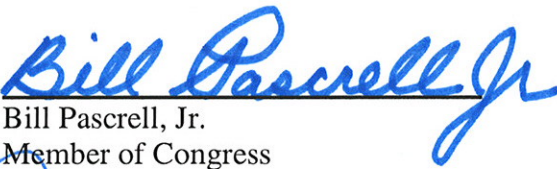
Among the most disturbing of proposals is the total elimination of FIRE grants and the SAFER Act Program. The funds provided through these programs function as the lifeblood for local fire stations throughout our nation. The FIRE grants have allowed local fire departments to purchase new firefighting equipment as well as protective gear and training programs to ensure that our firefighters are given the resources necessary to respond to any emergency. In addition, the SAFER Program has provided grants to local fire departments to support the hiring of career firefighters and programs for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters necessary to fill the staffing shortfall seen in most local fire departments. The fact is that the House of Representatives made clear the significance of these programs when we rejected this Administration's last attempt to zero-out funding by providing \$570 million for FIRE grants and \$230 million for the SAFER Program for fiscal year 2008. It is through our experience working with our local fire departments that we feel strongly that these programs are working and that they provide local fire departments with the tools they need to perform their day-to-day duties, as well as enhancing their ability to respond to large disasters.

These budget documents also propose funding the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) at \$400 million for fiscal year 2009, which would represent a severe cut to a critical program necessary to prevent a future terrorist attack. Again, the House of Representatives showed its strong support for UASI when we funded the program at \$800 million for fiscal year 2008. The UASI program is significant because it specifically addresses the unique planning, operations, equipment, training, and exercise needs of high-threat, high density Urban Areas. The White House budget documents also propose wholesale elimination of over \$450 million in transportation security and infrastructure protection grants provided by the House of Representatives for fiscal year 2008. These grants provide essential grants to secure critical transportation and infrastructure sectors such as rail and intercity bus systems, ports, trucking, and buffer zone protection for areas surrounding critical infrastructure. As

we know, terrorist groups like Al Qaeda concentrate on committing attacks on high-value targets that will cause the greatest loss of life and clearly those targets are located in our nation's urban areas. These proposed cuts to the UASI program and infrastructure grants will force city governments to scale back their homeland security efforts therefore leaving our nation's largest urban areas at greater risk.

We want to make clear that we stand ready in Congress to work with this Administration through next year's budget process. However, we cannot accept large cuts to Homeland Security programs that will leave our first responders under-funded and our nation's largest urban areas at greater risk. As representatives of the people, we take every opportunity to learn from our local officials and first responders on the ground about which programs are most effective and need to be strengthened. Similarly, we hope you will take this letter as an opportunity to understand our deep concern about these proposed cuts and work with us to strengthen the programs which have worked to truly increase our homeland security.

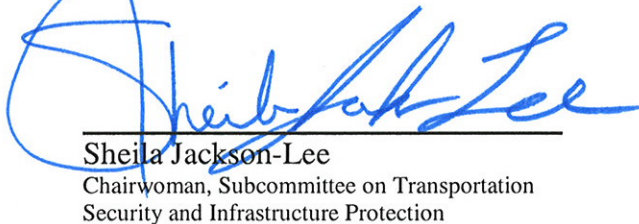
Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



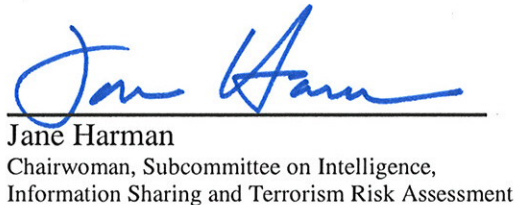
Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security



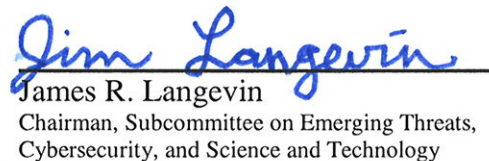
Sheila Jackson-Lee
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Transportation
Security and Infrastructure Protection



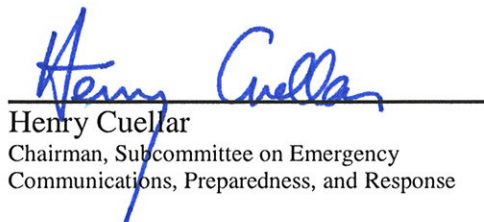
Loretta Sanchez
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Border, Maritime
and Global Counterterrorism



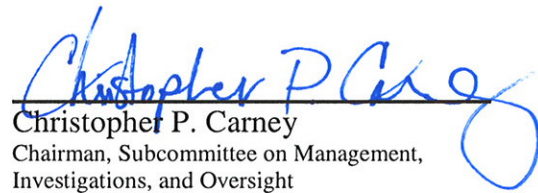
Jane Harman
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Intelligence,
Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment



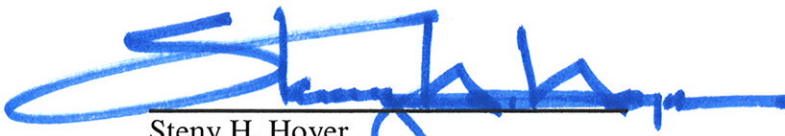
James R. Langevin
Chairman, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats,
Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology



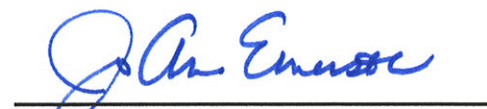
Henry Cuellar
Chairman, Subcommittee on Emergency
Communications, Preparedness, and Response



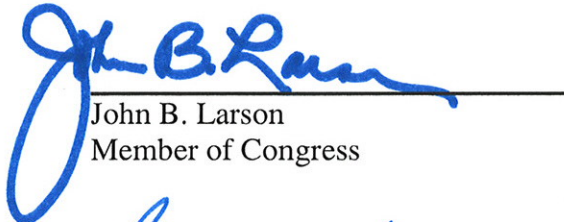
Christopher P. Carney
Chairman, Subcommittee on Management,
Investigations, and Oversight




Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress




Jo Ann Emerson
Member of Congress




John B. Larson
Member of Congress



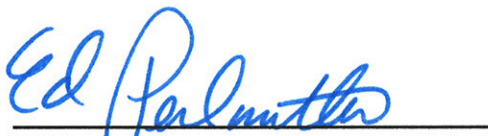
Jim Saxton
Member of Congress



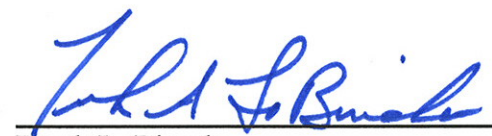
Robert E. Andrews
Member of Congress



John Boozman
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Frank LoBiondo
Member of Congress



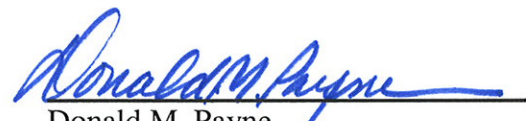
Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress




Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress



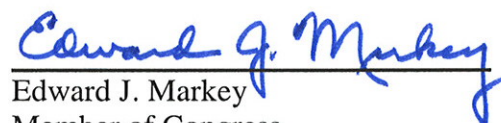
Steven R. Rothman
Member of Congress



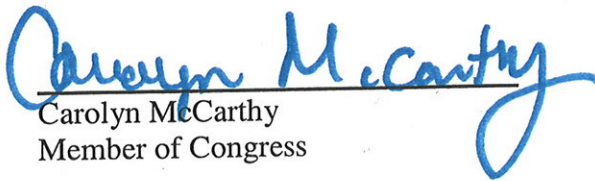
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

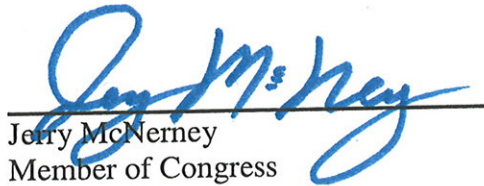


Bob Etheridge
Member of Congress

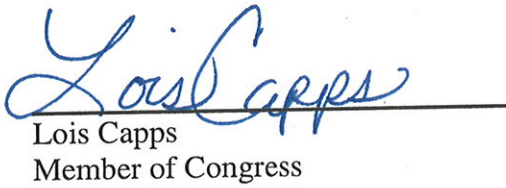



Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress

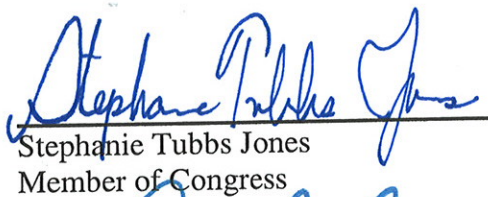

Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress

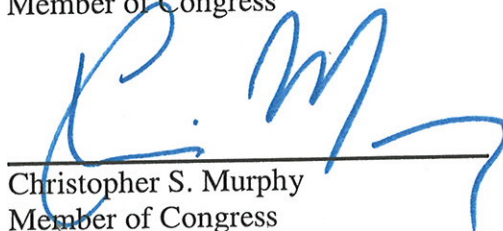

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

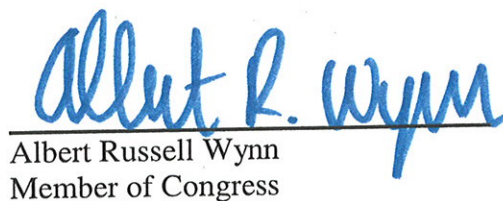

Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress

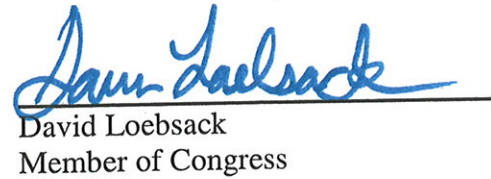

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

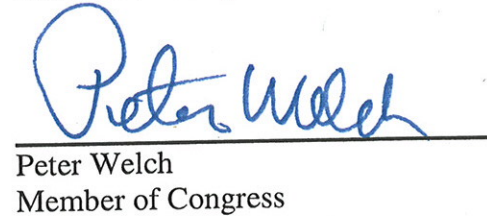

Corrine Brown
Member of Congress


Stephanie Tubbs Jones
Member of Congress

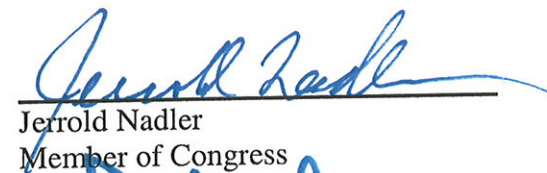

Christopher S. Murphy
Member of Congress

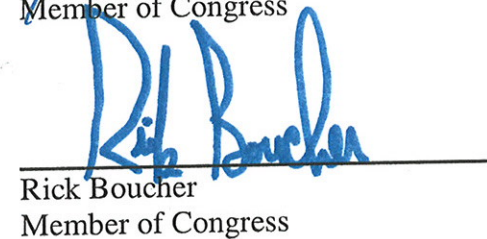

Albert Russell Wynn
Member of Congress

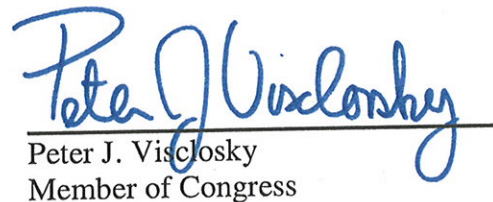

David Loebsack
Member of Congress

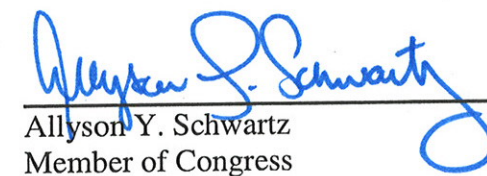

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

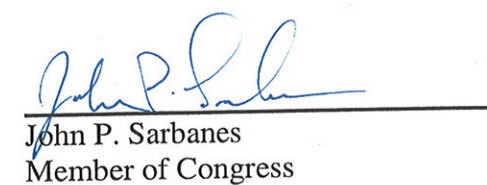

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress


Jerrold Nadler
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Rick Boucher
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Peter J. Visclosky
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Allyson Y. Schwartz
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John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Jim Gerlach
Member of Congress



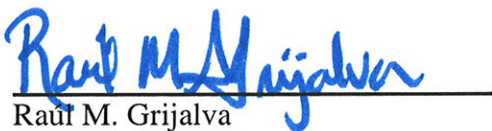
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



William D. Delahunt
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Thomas H. Allen
Member of Congress



Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Tim Holden
Member of Congress



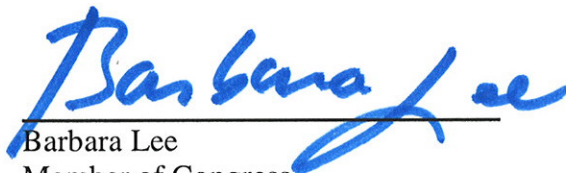
Ellen O. Tauscher
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James P. Moran
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Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress



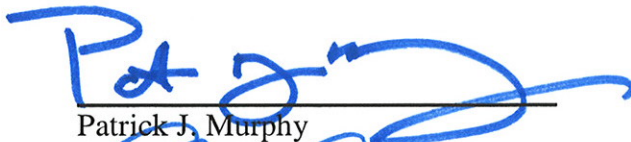
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Jason Altmire
Member of Congress



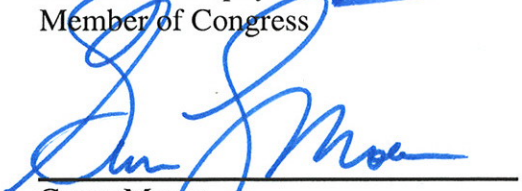
Bob Filner
Member of Congress



Patrick J. Murphy
Member of Congress



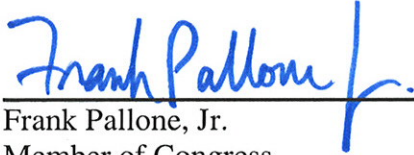
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Betty Sutton
Member of Congress



Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



David Scott
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Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
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